



Site Identification Strategies



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Agenda

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- Why is prioritizing sites important
- Who can provide insight and assistance in the process
- Which criteria helps focus attention on properties with the greatest need
- Alternative approaches to identify sites
- Case Studies in Brownfield Site Selection
 - Urban Renewal – Slum & Blight determination
 - Decision Matrix



The Importance of Prioritizing Brownfield Sites

- Provides a means of identifying areas where the potential presence of environmentally impaired site(s) are most pronounced and provides resources to quantify impacts to health and the environment.
 - Vacant sites and/or abandoned buildings
 - Unsecured sites
 - Tax Delinquent properties
 - LMI neighborhoods
 - Populated by elderly, individuals with physical disabilities, etc.
 - Threat to public water supplies (i.e., municipal wells)
 - Etc.
- Community Wide Assessment Grants provide limited funds to conduct ESAs
- Targeted areas and specific properties should lead to predefined outcomes
 - Removal of threats to human health and the environment
 - Restore opportunities for in-fill development
 - Facilitate private sector development and job creation
 - Etc.



Key Players

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- Having a good cross-representative group of individuals to identify properties can help target areas and sites where investigations are needed the most
- Stakeholder opportunities:
 - Fire marshal or other public safety staff familiar with vulnerable areas
 - Code enforcement staff
 - City/County Assessor
 - Community Development/Planning staff
 - Neighborhood Associations
 - County Conservation Commissions
 - Economic Developers
 - Health Department staff



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Defining Criteria

- Socio-economic considerations
 - Proximity to schools
 - Proximity to elderly housing
 - Tax delinquency
- Slum and Blighting Characteristics:
 - Deteriorated structures
 - Abandoned structures
 - Unsecured areas – especially those prone to illegal dumping or criminal activities
- Environmental Characteristics:
 - Presence of LUST or UST Sites
 - Listing on the Toxic Chemical Release Inventory System
 - Listing on the NEI, RCRA, or AIRS/AFS data bases
 - Historic use
 - Current use
 - Zoning
- Redevelopment Potential:
 - Parcel size
 - Parcel location
 - Ability to secure access - voluntarily



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How do we get started

- Environmental Data Registry (EDR) Report
 - The EDR Report is a definitive source for environmental impacts (i.e., permits, releases, violations, etc.) for specific areas
- Urban Renewal Plans and/or District Surveys
 - Urban Renewal Plans and/or plans that provide the basis for establishing tax increment financing (TIF) districts include a summary of existing conditions that help substantiate the creation of the district – i.e., slum and blighting conditions
- Adopted Plans provide a basis for identifying vulnerable areas
 - Comprehensive Plans, Neighborhood Plans, Community Vulnerability Assessments, and related documents can provide substantive information on areas that have evidence of physical deterioration and/or citizens experiencing economic isolation (low-income, minority, high unemployment, etc.)
- Site Prioritization Matrix
 - Establish criteria and weighted scoring criteria to identify targeted sites.



Sites to Avoid

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- Sites that are listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL); subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government
- Sites where the applicant can be considered a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP)
- Sites acquired without satisfying the All Appropriate Inquiry requirement
 - Exceptions: Properties acquired through tax foreclosure and eminent domain
- Sites subject to an enforcement action
- **Ultimately Site Eligibility Determinations will indicate if federal funds can be used on a site**



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Slum and Blighting Conditions Surveys

- Entitlement communities or cities/counties that establish Urban Renewal Areas and/or TIF districts to eradicate slum or blighting conditions must make a finding that 25% of the properties exhibit deteriorating conditions.
- These studies frequently identify underutilized or abandoned commercial and industrial sites that may be impacted by environmental impairments.
- In addition, collecting information on property tax delinquencies may also identify potential sites.
- The inventory process can be quite extensive; however it can provide a valuable tool in quantifying need and begin to identify approaches that remove conditions that make the area less stable.
 - See attached sample survey for data collected to quantify slum and blighting conditions.



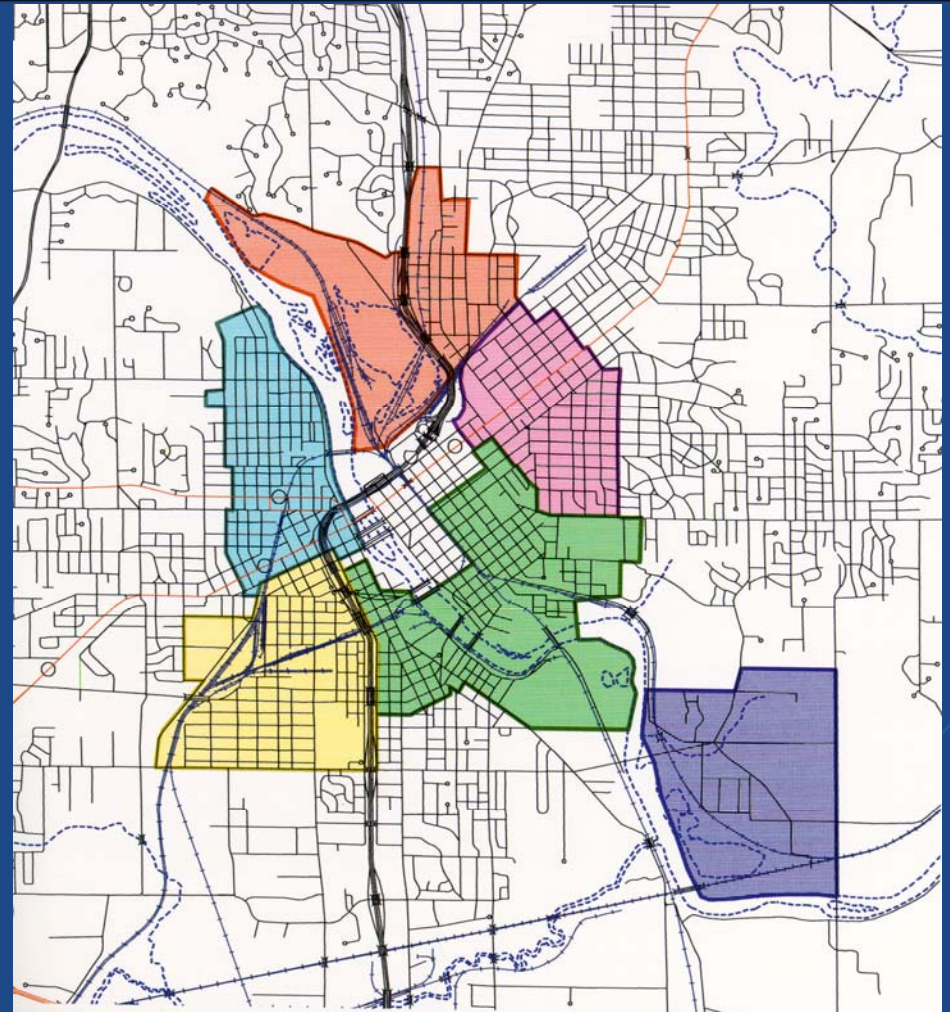
Planning for and Conducting a Slum and Blighting Conditions Survey

- Define the area(s)
- Get property records from the affected area(s) – assessor, county auditor, etc.
- Define the database fields
- Determine how data sets will be collected and used”
 - Hard copy surveys that are given to Administrative Assistants for data input; or
 - PDAs that use simple database software to assemble pull-down menus and effectively dump data at the end of a collection period.
- Train field staff so they know what to look for and how to evaluate properties for varying degrees of deterioration.
- Implement



Case Study 1: Slum & Blighting Characteristics Survey

- Approximately 10,000 properties were examined over a 2 month period
- Nearly 400 properties meeting the brownfields definition were identified
- Data was collected via PDAs with an off-the-shelf database software programmed to use pull-down menus.
- Process worked well for GIS applications and data manipulation
- Challenges resulted from some lost data between work in the field and downloading it at the office. However, with the help of IT and more frequent "file save" procedures, problems went away





Environmental Scan and Site Identification Matrix

- This approach provides a tailored means of identifying and prioritizing sites for Phase I ESAs.
- While criteria and weighted scoring are used, the process should be used as a guide to select sites for environmental investigations.
- Other factors, such as an imminent development opportunity, planned acquisition of high priority sites (e.g., abandoned railroad corridors, tax delinquent properties, etc.) can always trump other sites.
- Ultimately, this approach is designed to provide some logic between how sites are identified for Phase I ESAs and what the Grantee hopes to achieve by way of conducting the investigations – site acquisition, remove barriers that have prevented redevelopment, etc.



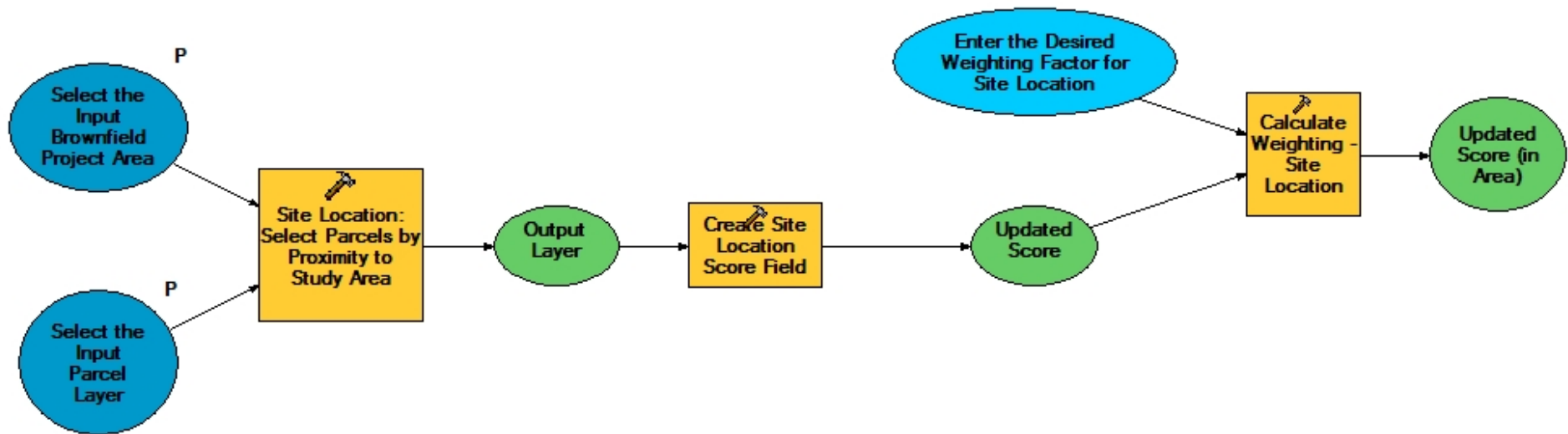
Conducting an Environmental Scan and Assembling a Site Priority Matrix

- Conduct a records search of the target area. The records and distances searched will be those designated in ASTM E1527-05.
- Search federal and state databases for notices of violation of environmental regulations or other regulator actions for the properties in the target area.
- Record results of the search via an annotated map of the target area.
- Gather historical data concerning the target area.
 - This would include historical maps, aerial photographs, and city directories to determine sites with environmental significance that are not listed on the governmental databases.
- Discuss search findings and initial prioritization for industrial or commercial use and greenspace. Also, discuss which sites are more appropriate for hazardous material investigations and those that are more predisposed to petroleum contamination – assuming both grant options are available.



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Automate the Prioritization Process





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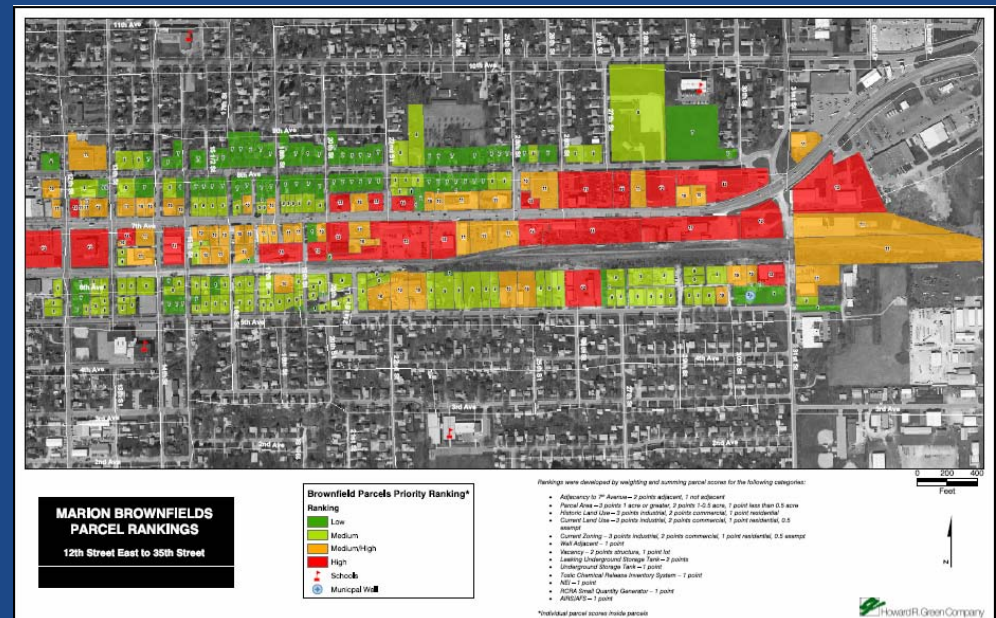
Example of Weighted Scoring

- Site is within or adjacent to the target area: 1 point if within, or 0 points if outside the target area
- Parcel size – (3 points 1 acre or larger, 2 points 1.0 – 0.5 acres, 1 point less than 0.5 acres)
- Historic Use: 3 points industrial, 2 points commercial; 1 point residential
- Current Land Use: 3 points industrial, 2 points commercial, 1 point residential, 0.5 exempt
- Current Zoning: 3 points industrial, 2 points commercial, 1 point residential, 0.5 exempt
- Adjacent to a private or municipal well: 1 point
- Vacancy: 2 points if it involves a structure, or 1 point if the site is a vacant lot
- Tax Delinquency: 1 point if the site/property is delinquent in paying property taxes
- Proximity to School: 1 point if adjacent to school
- Proximity to Elderly Housing: 1 point if adjacent to elderly housing
- Proximity to Low-Income Census Block: 1 point if adjacent to low-income census block
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank: 2 points
- Underground Storage Tank: 1 point
- Listing on the Toxic Chemical Release Inventory System: 1 point
- Listing on the National Emissions Inventories (NEI): 1 point
- RCRA Small Quantity Generator: 1 point
- Listing on the Aerometric Information Retrieval System/AIRS Facility Subsystem (AIRS/AFS): 1 point.



Case Study 2: Decision Matrix

- Data corresponding to the two previous slides were collected and geocoded
- Process identified 281 properties for Phase I ESAs
- Environmental investigations completed on 14 sites
- Helped facilitate the acquisition of an abandoned railroad corridor
- Other planned acquisitions underway





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Summary Comments

- Site identification strategies are designed to set a road map that prioritizes sites for environmental investigations – for community-wide assessments this is far more productive than taking a piece-meal approach
- Prioritizing sites can help establish efficiencies and cost-saving measures in conducting assessments
 - Sites can be grouped for investigations
- It is important to establish criteria that people understand and value when identifying sites and establishing priorities
- It is also important to involve people from a broad spectrum of interests (e.g., residents, public officials, associated non-profit organizations, etc.)
- Recognize the sensitivity in revealing this type of information – some owners may have concerns about their site being listed as a high-priority brownfield.



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Questions



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